



SAN DIEGO MARINES PROVIDE AIR SUPPORT IN WILDFIRES BATTLE



As seven wildfires simultaneously burned throughout southern California, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) sprung into action to respond to the natural disaster last week. Aboard eight CH-53 Super Stallions and CH-46 Sea Knights, Marines from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. worked hand in hand with the local agencies to extinguish the fire from the air, as ground access was limited due to flames that engulfed 23,000 acres of the surrounding area. "It feels very rewarding to be able to

give back to the community in a real way and incorporate a lot of the things that we train to for when we are in a combat environment," said Capt. Charlene Wyman, HMH-462 Pilot Training Officer, Miramar. "And [to] be able use those in our own backyard and help out our neighbors is very rewarding." The wildfires, which caused hundreds of residents to evacuate, were caused by lightning.

Watch 3rd MAW in Action

Watch More: Marines Provide Relief in California Wildfires

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Marine Lance Cpl. Candido Rodriguez Jr. lets his 9-month-old niece, Bella, try on his cover with help from his sister, Bella's mother, Jasmine Rodriguez, during his surprise welcome home party Aug. 19 in Vineland, NJ. (Photo by Cody Glenn/The Daily Journal)

NEWS

COMMANDANT: ASIA-PACIFIC REGION 'TIP OF THE WAR-FIGHTING SPEAR'

General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Micheal P. Barrett visited Okinawa Aug. 12 to address Marines on current issues and the importance of their mission in the Asia-Pacific region. Throughout their Western Pacific Tour, the Corps' top leadership highlighted the critical role of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) when it comes to U.S. presence in the region.

"There is nobody further west, there is nobody more engaged, there is nobody that has greater relationships, there is nobody that is more predictable in regards to helping our neighbors, our friends, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and war-fighting plans than the III Marine Expeditionary Force," said Amos in a live radio interview with American Forces Network Okinawa at Camp Foster. "This really is the tip of the war-fighting spear."

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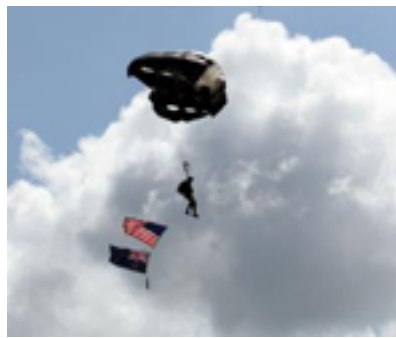
Also Read: Pacific Marines Head Into Austerity and Frugality



KHAAN QUEST KICKS OFF IN MONGOLIA



Exercise Khaan Quest, sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific and hosted by the Mongolian Armed Forces in partnership with U.S. Pacific Command, kicked off the 2012 event Aug. 12 after an opening ceremony at the Mongolian Five Hills Training Area near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The annual event provides service members with an opportunity to train in a multicultural environment and diversify their approach to peacekeeping operations. "I am excited to take part in Exercise Khaan Quest," said Cpl. Stephen E. Jones, a squad leader with Company E,



2nd Battalion. "It will present a good training opportunity for everyone involved. I am interested in seeing how their military operates as well as bettering ourselves by learning different ways to complete the training objectives we are given." This year marks the 25th anniversary of Mongolia and U.S. relations, and over 1,000 participants are expected. The annual exercise started as a joint event co-hosted by the Marine Corps in 2003.

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24TH MEU, SPMAGTF TRAIN UGANDAN SOLDIERS FOR SOMALIA MISSION

Eleven Marines from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit recently linked up with a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) in Uganda to conduct training for soldiers of the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF). Since July and through September, the Marines are helping the UPDF hone their skills in marksmanship, small unit tactics and engineering prior to the Ugandan soldiers deployment in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia. "The training that we are receiving is giving us experience for when we are going in for an attack in an urban environment. This type of training is something that our enemies may not have and it will help us defeat them," said Pvt. Kenneth Edep, a combat engineer with the UPDF. "I wish that all of our soldiers could participate in this training and experience."

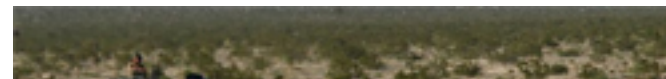
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TWENTYNINE PALMS LAND EXPANSION WOULD ALLOW FOR MEB-LEVEL EXERCISES

A new plan pending approval by the Navy Department and Congress would add two



pieces of land to the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif. The land addition would allow for large-scale exercises at the base, including training of an entire Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), consisting of about 15,000 troops, plus equipment, weapons systems and aircraft. Although Twentynine Palms is the largest base in the Marine Corps, terrain restrictions such as mountain ranges and biologically sensitive areas limit how large-scale units can train, said Capt. Nick Mannweiler, spokesman for the combat center. In order to train a MEB, the Corps would need to operate three battalions, simultaneously maneuvering for 48 to 72 hours with combined live fire and the accompanying air space, he said. A Center for Naval Analyses study shows that Twentynine Palms is the only location with sufficient land and airspace potential to meet the training requirements.

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Land Aquisition Study Website



FROM VIETNAM TO AFGHANISTAN, ICONIC AIRCRAFT MAKES FINAL FLIGHT



The CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopter made its final flight Aug. 16 in Helmand province, Afghanistan. Since its first use with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 (HMM-362) "Ugly Angels" in 1969 during the Vietnam conflict, the CH-53D has participated in combat and humanitarian operations worldwide. "I feel honored to have served in this aircraft and to have seen it come full circle in the Middle East," said Gunnery Sgt. Michael A. Schram, HMM-362 crew chief and a member of the final flight. "I flew with this

aircraft when it first came into Iraq and to be on the last flight in Afghanistan makes this a sad but good day. It brought an end to something great and I hope that we gave closure to the legacy that the Marines in Vietnam started." Across the fleet, the CH-53E has replaced the D variant for heavy-lift operations.

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MARINE AVIATION MEMORIAL TOWER DEDICATED IN PENSACOLA



A Marine Aviation Memorial Tower was dedicated in Pensacola, Fla. Aug. 19 during a ceremony held at Veterans Memorial Park. The 30 foot tower features a 250-pound bell, which symbolizes the bells used in Marine aviation units to sound a call to action when word is received that ground forces are in need of air support. "This is a wonderful tribute to warriors who answered the call," said Philip Scott, captain of the Patriot Guard Riders contingent from Louisville, Ky., who directed the tower on its journey from

Cincinnati where it was built by Verdin Company. "It's a wonderful contribution to this country's culture and history and speaks well of Pensacola as a place that honors those who served," said Scott. The ceremony brought together 400 community members, including Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward who praised Pensacola Naval Air Station's long history of training Marine Corps pilots.

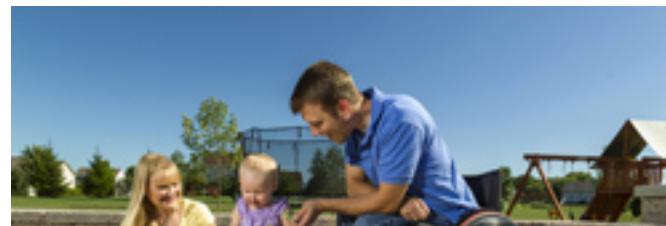
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TRANSITION

LEGISLATION WOULD EXPAND FERTILITY COVERAGE FOR VETS

The Senate is considering a bill that expands the Department of Veteran Affairs' (VA) medical benefits package to include in vitro fertilization (IVF). Though the department currently covers some infertility care in the benefits package, the legislation specifically



authorizes the VA to cover IVF and to pay for procedures now provided for some critically injured active-duty soldiers. "It's common sense: a male veteran cannot have a kid by himself. It doesn't happen. They need obviously to have it with their wife or a

partner," said Andrew Robinson, 29, who was injured in a 2006 explosion in Al Anbar province. "So for the VA to say, 'Oh, we can only cover this part of it,' it just kind of doesn't make sense." The bill is meant to help veterans who have suffered injuries impairing their ability to have children and address the consequences combat injuries can have on a couple's marriage as their loved ones return home from war.

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SEMPER FI

MARINES MAKE HOUSE CALL TO DELIVER MEDAL TO OLDEST LIVING MONTFORD POINT MARINE

At 102, Richard Vanderlippe Washington is the oldest living member of the Montford Point Marines, the first African Americans to serve in the Corps. At the age of 33, Washington enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1942 following President Franklin Roosevelt's creation of the Fair Employment Practices Commission, which paved the way for African Americans to serve in the military. "I wanted to be a Marine because it was impossible to do -- because they would not accept me as a black man," said Washington. "I read about Roosevelt's order in the Philadelphia Bulletin and rushed into work and asked for a couple of hours off." Unable to make the trip to Washington, D.C. to receive the Congressional Gold Medal with his fellow Montford Point Marines, 12 Marines in full dress uniform arrived at Washington's front door Aug. 18 to award him the medal.

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